



2GreenThumbsUp!

Adventures in the garden , backyard and beyond...



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November 25th, 2008

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Mary in All Posts, Monthly To Do's



- HOME
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You know winter is almost upon us when the list of things to do in the garden gets shorter and shorter and shorter...

1. Pot some paperwhites or hyacinths in gravel with half the bulb exposed. Refrigerate for about ten weeks then place in a sunny spot.
2. Reduce watering and fertilizing of houseplants.
3. Dig a hole and store the soil indoors if you are planning to have a "living" Christmas tree. After the holiday plant the tree, wrap with burlap, mulch and water.
4. Make detailed notes about your gardens while you can still remember what worked and what didn't.
5. Clean and repair garden tools before storing. (I like to give rakes and shovels a good scrub with soap, water & a piece of steel wool, then dry with an old towel and coat the metal surfaces with a bit of mineral oil to keep them rust free.)

10 comments

October 9th, 2008

Mary in All Posts, Monthly To Do's



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1. Clean up vegetable garden and till soil.
2. Remove annuals and cut back perennials leaving some seedheads for the winter birds and to trap snow for insulation.
3. Lift tender bulbs after tops have died; clean, dry and store in a cool space.
4. Hill roses with triple mix; trim to 12" - 24".
5. Plant spring bulbs; add bonemeal and water well.
6. Prune old wood and crossed branches in shrubs and trees.
7. Keep watering trees and shrubs before cold weather comes.
8. Mulch perennials with compost or with peat moss, or a mix of both.
9. Wrap tender shrubs for winter protection.
10. Clean and store planters and pots.
11. Rake leaves and use as mulch in flower beds or spread on vegetable gardens to compost.
12. Dig up geraniums. Dry plants and shake off most of soil. Hang in paper bags in a cool place to overwinter.
13. Go for a hike!

5 comments

September 29th, 2008

justMD

Cathy in All Posts, Critters, DIY Garden / Backyard Projects



Remember earlier in the summer I did a few posts on birdhouses? One featured my (and mom's) collection of [barnboard birdhouses](#) and another included links to [free birdhouse plans](#). There was one thing that all these birdhouses had in common - traditional/rustic styling. A rustic birdhouse is fine for some, but what if you prefer your birdhouse to have a more contemporary or modern aesthetic? There are modern birdhouses available for purchase, but they can come with a pretty hefty price tag. Thanks to [Chrisjob](#) over at [curbly](#), the search for a reasonably priced modern birdhouse can finally come to an end. He has written a post and provided [video instructions](#) on how to

plan3D
YOUR ONLINE HOME DESIGN TOOL

- ▶ Gardener's To Do List - November
- ▶ Gardener's To Do List - October
- ▶ DIY Mid-Century Modern Birdhouse
- ▶ Gardener's To Do List - September
- ▶ Making the New Landscape Pretty
- ▶ Planting 6000 Sq. Ft. of Lawn
- ▶ Compost Bouquet
- ▶ The Garden "Good Guys" - SGI #9
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switA

- ▶ November 2008
- ▶ October 2008
- ▶ September 2008
- ▶ August 2008
- ▶ July 2008
- ▶ June 2008

32,489
spam comments

build your own modern birdhouse.

5 comments

September 13th, 2008

#6 - tsLB's' m6

Mary in All Posts, Monthly To Do's

1. Bring indoor plants back into the house, checking to be sure that they will not carry pests or disease with them.
2. Remove faded annuals from pots and replace them with mums, kale, grasses or decorative gourds etc.
3. Protect tender vegetables from frosty nights to prolong harvest.
4. Plant or transplant evergreens, trees and shrubs on a cool, damp day; water well.
5. Top-dress, aerate and overseed to improve lawns.
6. Cut back spring-flowering perennials; divide and transplant.
7. Cut back herbs by 1/2; plant garlic.
8. Collect seeds; store in paper bags in a cool, dry place.
9. Turn compost.
10. Buy bulbs when selection is good and store in a cool place until planting time.

And a last little reminder by Cathy...

Get out there and enjoy your garden while the weather is still nice enough to do so!

2 comments

August 26th, 2008

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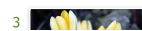
Cathy in All Posts, Garden / Landscape Design, Projects On The Side

We've covered the [landscape plan](#), the [hardscaping](#), [planted the lawn](#) - where are we at now? Oh yes, the fun stuff - adding trees, shrubs and perennials to make the new landscape pretty! This was definitely the fun part, but it was also challenging too. So many different areas, so many different environmental considerations, so many different plants to choose from!

I've always been able to easily visualize the potential of a space, however, with the abundance of garden spaces requiring attention, I thought it best to use some visual aids. With my trusty digital camera in hand I did a walk-about and took pictures of each area. Along with the photos of the individual areas, I put together pictures and lists of what I felt would be suitable plants, shrubs, and trees for in each area. These photo collages worked as a general guide for me and they also gave the owners an idea of the direction in which I was thinking of going.

Garden Photos & Plant Ideas

This is the half of the berm that needed the most attention.



Log in

- ▶ June 2008
- ▶ May 2008
- ▶ April 2008
- ▶ March 2008
- ▶ February 2008
- ▶ January 2008
- ▶ December 2007
- ▶ November 2007
- ▶ October 2007
- ▶ September 2007
- ▶ August 2007
- ▶ July 2007



5



1. Narcissus
2. Shasta Daisy
3. Crocus
4. Blanket Flower
5. Black-Eyed Susan
6. Juniper
7. Goat's Beard
8. Rue
9. Sweet Woodruff



6



7



8

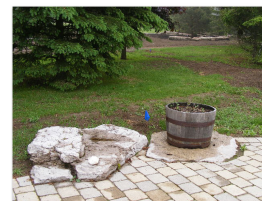
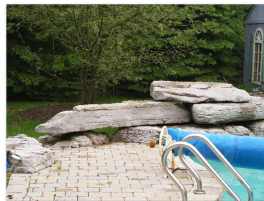


9

The other half, that runs along the side of the garage, was filled with three mature spruce trees and really only needed some type of ground cover and possibly some perennial ferns.



Perhaps the most under-developed area with the largest potential was around the pool. I envisioned a sort of oasis framed by tall ornamental grasses.



1



2



3



1. Black-Eyed Susan
2. Purple Cone Flower
3. Sedum
4. Autumn Reed Grass
5. Zebra Grass
6. Dwarf Fountain Grass

4



5



6



The new hardscaping along the edge of the front left garden area added considerable depth, but the plants and shrubs left in their original spots were crowded in the back half of the space. As well, all of those existing shrubs were deciduous and the majority of them were the same shape and height. This area really needed variety - different textures, colors, and heights to add visual interest.

A small bed was added to the right of the front door. I wanted to add a lower layer in front of the burning bush.

This bed at the north-west front of the house has been like a blank canvas for the past two summers. The only items to be found in it - a bit of English Ivy growing at opposite ends and a Spirea shrub that was plopped in temporarily by the landscaping company to get it out of the way.



Over the past two years the garden along the west side of the house has

served mainly as a holding place for displaced shrubs. A little order was in order.



Another garden bed was created at the back of the new patio - a small section in front of the landscaping stone, level with the patio, and a larger bed below, on the other side of the landscaping stone.



The back porch area remained the most dense of all the different garden spaces at the farm. Even with the number of shrubs that had already been relocated to the holding garden on the west side, It was still overflowing with deciduous shrubs. A few more of those deciduous shrubs needed to be removed and evergreen shrubs planted in their places.





For the steps at the back porch I wanted to start with some lower herbs, perennials and evergreens that graduated in height as they reached the fuller, larger gardens on each side.



1. Periwinkle/Myrtle
2. Creeping Thyme
3. Astilbe
4. Hosta
5. Perennial Ferns
6. Walker's Low Catmint

After going from the berm(s) to the pool, to the house, then working all the way around, we come to the final garden - the east side. It's been a haven for divided clumps of hosta and volunteer columbines from my own garden. Time for an identity of its own.



1. Dense Yew
2. Weigela
3. Sedum
4. Hosta
5. Columbine
6. Juniper
7. Perennial Ferns
8. Lady's Mantle
9. Snowdrop Anemone

So, how did the finished gardens turn out? Do they resemble the original plans? Did I use all or any of the plants shown in these photo collage guides? You'll find out when I do - it's almost done!

8 comments

August 23rd, 2008

With all the [hardscaping finished](#) at the farm it was finally my turn to get my hands dirty. First up - getting 6000 square feet of proposed lawn area ready for grass seed. Normally I wouldn't attempt to plant grass seed during the hottest part of the summer, but at the time that all of the hardscaping was being done, the owner's of the farm had an irrigation system installed too.



The top soil had been spread for about two weeks before the irrigation system was operational and in the dry heat of July it had become rock solid. That two-week period was also just enough time for a slew of weed seeds to take hold and flourish. With no heavy equipment left to help me out (where's there a skidsteer when I need one), it was a back-breaking process to loosen the soil, remove the weeds and rake the area smooth. Ruts from tire tracks, caterpillar tracks, and skidsteer tracks (sniff) didn't make the job any easier. Good thing I'm a sucker for physical labor!

After many hours of toiling in the hot sun and inhaling multiple gallons of water, the lawn area was ready to seed. I think it was during this process of soil preparation that my fabulous flip-flop tan really became established!





A lawn spreader made quick work of the seeding and the new irrigation system combined with lots of sunshine provided excellent germination and growing conditions. Although it will require overseeding and there are a few patchy spots, most of the lawn has filled in nicely.



If you look closely in the picture above you'll spot a garden fork stuck in the dirt of the front garden. That garden fork signals the start of the fun stuff - adding trees, shrubs and perennials.

no comment

August 21st, 2008



Cathy in All Posts, Kids In The Garden, This & That

With all the activity going on at the farm, I've been spending a fair amount of time at my brother's house. (The drive to the farm is only 35 minutes from his house compared to an hour from mine.) As a way of saying 'thank you for letting me crash, I try to do a little work in the gardens while I'm there. During a stay several weeks ago I trimmed the dogwoods along with various other shrubs and perennials. I could have sworn I'd put all of the trimmings and clippings in the compost bin, but a few choice bits didn't quite make it that far.

Unknown to me at the time, my niece had pilfered from the pile meant for composting. A little later on she presented me with this bouquet and handmade card:





Where I saw garden refuse, she saw something pretty. It was an unexpected and wonderfully sweet surprise. Having another look at it through her eyes, I too could see the beauty. This simple compost bouquet of Russian Sage, Euonymus and Myrtle is still sitting on my kitchen counter and I smile whenever I look at it.

5 comments

August 20th, 2008

\$ 6- \$20.00

Mary in All Posts, SGI - Simple Green Ideas



More Simple Green Ideas for Yard and Garden Pest Control

No extra special ingredients required here - just a few tips for helping mother nature do her thing.

Ladybugs, Praying Mantis, Dragonflies - all eat mites and aphids; mantis also

eat caterpillars, beetles, and crickets; dragonflies eat mosquitoes (ladybugs are drawn to certain plants - cilantro, coreopsis and scented geranium to name a few, dragonflies are drawn to water gardens)

Toads and Turtles - consume cut worms, aphids and flies (attract these garden good guys by placing an old box or board in a damp, shady part of the garden)

Bats, Purple Martins, Swallows - feed on all kinds of flying insects (encourage these good guys to stick around by installing bird houses and bat houses)

no comment

August 19th, 2008

in the Garden

Cathy in All Posts, Garden / Landscape Design, Projects On The Side

Remember way back in January I wrote about doing up a [garden and landscape plan](#) for the farm ([Garden Gone Wild](#))? Well... after many months, it's actually coming together.

Plans have a tendency to change, and although I was all psyched up to organize and orchestrate the entire plan, some things change for the better. The original plan to overhaul just the front gardens was greatly expanded to include the addition of a berm, retaining walls, new patio, new porch floor and stairs, and new paths/walkways. Ultimately, the hardscaping was completed by a professional landscaping team from Toronto. Instead of carrying out the hardscaping *and* the planting, I only had to do the planting. The only planting the landscape company did was with a large tree spade - moving/relocating some large trees from elsewhere on the property to be incorporated in the berm. In hindsight I realize that the job of bringing in and arranging all of that landscape stone, then filling the gardens with shrubs and perennials was bigger and much more involved than I imagined. (Really, all I wanted to do was drive a skidsteer.)

Here are pictures of the landscape after the hardscaping was completed. It's quite a change from the minor [garden improvements](#) made over the two previous summers.



Part of the berm is shown at the right of this photo. There is a new slate walkway leading from the driveway to the house that divides the berm in two. The part of the berm not shown in this photo runs along the side of the garage.



Even though I didn't do the arranging of the landscape stone, it was gratifying for me to see that the end result at the front very closely resembled what I had drawn in my [landscape plan](#). The retaining walls in the front are a combination of natural stone and low mortared slate.



The doors from the sunroom now open onto a new brick patio. Large landscape stones have been added to both sides of the steps and at the rear of the patio. At the left of this picture you can see a new garden bed below the patio and landscape stones.





From the patio, a new slate path leads across the back of the house and steps down to connect with the new back porch stairs, then continues on to the pool area. Large stones have been used to retain the garden beds at the corner of the sunroom.



A bit of the the new porch floor and steps are visible when looking back towards the sunroom. The edges of the gardens are roughly defined by more large landscape stones.



A view back to the driveway, garage and berm. The part of the berm that is visible in this picture is surrounded on three sides with large pieces of natural stone. The grade of the fourth, open edge of the berm gradually slopes down to lawn level. A mature Scots pine, relocated by the landscapers, has a prominent position within the perimeter of the berm.

So much has happened - the hardscaping was just the beginning.

3 comments

...wild ginger,



...a camouflaged mailbox,



...mutant Queen Anne's Lace? Genetically altered Joe Pye Weed? (My best guess - [Giant Hogweed](#)),



...how many shrubs I could fit in my car,



...a beautiful iron gate,



...a cluster of birdhouses,



and a seedhead at sunset.



[2 comments](#)

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